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BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION

[00:00 - 01:15] Speaker 1: Discover you might want to. Today we're going to have a great talk by [inaudible] Harry Boone is a fellow and our fellows program and I can looking around I'm seeing quite a number of fellows and I'm seeing quite a number of fellows already try to twist Pete's arm to apply next year anyway. So if you're not a fellow of our fellows program, you might [inaudible] and so you can get in touch with us about that. Okay. So Carrie, who is she? So I see UC Santa Cruz and let me say and she studied there for her BA in food systems and social change. Wow. Now that is a subject matter. I like it in the community studies department. Right. And then after that, it's actually not so clear what you did after that. But she worked she worked for eight years in Central America and Mexico as a student program developer and as now as an action researcher, which I really like. [laughs] So she's she's registered here in the sociology department as a master's student. And she's going to talk to us today about tackling climate change, food sovereignty and home gardens in northern Nicaragua. And I know I'm the only one in the room that always has to have food sovereignty, you know, to find it again and again and again. She has done it about ten times, but I'm hoping she'll do that as well.

[01:15 - 01:15] Carrie: Oh, yeah. No problem.

[01:15 - 01:22] Speaker 1: And so we're extremely lucky to have her here today. And so she'll hold forth and then we'll have a good discussion afterwards. And thank you so much for coming. Carrie, come on.

[01:25 - 01:44] Carrie: Okay, I'm going. So can I get the recording? [laughs] and how many times they say, um, okay. [laughs] Thank you.

[01:45 - 01:48] Speaker 1: It actually counts up how many ums that are at the end. It shows it on the screen. [laughs]

[01:52 - 04:19] Carrie: Okay, cool. Great. Well, first of all, thanks everyone, for coming. This is awesome. Surprise to see you all out here and interested in the research I've been doing. For the last few years, but also for the last, like she said, eight years I've been working in different NGOs in Guatemala and and one based in Santa Cruz where I had the opportunity to visit and do program development and different all sorts of different countries in Central America and Mexico. So this research is sort of a culmination of not just my research over the summer, but also those years that I've spent working in this field. So so I was invited to by a research team to come participate as a visiting researcher in a long term food security and food sovereignty project. You find that [inaudible] in just one moment. [chuckles] And and they they are looking at the projected impacts of climate change in the Central American region and in particular this this region of Nicaragua, which is right on the northern border with Honduras, this little green area there. And and there's some pretty sort of worrisome projections in terms of food production in the area. So so the goal of this presentation is sort of to give like a snapshot of the on the ground realities what's going on. And in Northern Highlands, in Uruguay and also so the process of development of the development project and how farmers are thinking about and how organizations are thinking about the process of community development. So there'll be some research findings and stuff like that. But I also just wanted to bring this like picture of what's going on there and the process that I went through to do the research so, ooh well, hold on a minute. [chuckles] So the largest, real quick, the larger project is working with a project team of a Nicaraguan NGO, a second level coffee cooperative, some a research team of participatory action researchers as they identify, and 18 base level coffee cooperatives. The the map on the right there are the 18 different co-ops and little, little yellow dots there in three different departments of Nicaragua.

[04:21 - 06:59] So that's sort of the research site that I was working in. And and like I mentioned, sort of looking for strategies to address these impacts of climate change. So this is that same region. And on the left is, is sort of the region of suitability for growing coffee. And coffee is one of the main income sources for most of the families and lots of cases the the only income source in terms of

financial money. And so additionally there's also, most farmers rely on subsistence farming of corn and beans as part of their livelihoods. So this is from the International Center of Tropical Agriculture. There's also been various other UN reports and World Bank reports projecting that the climate change will have dramatic impact on the production of coffee and staple crops. So the actuals on the left, the green part is the the land arable land that is is ripe for coffee growing. I should mention that coffee is a very special crop. It requires very particular temperatures and rainfall and soil conditions and management practices, particularly like Arabica coffee, like the stuff we all love to drink. It needs a very particular altitude, high altitude coffee. So this is what it is right now. And by 2050, they're projecting that the picture on the right will be the actual suitability region. So that has a lot of people concerned. And the NGOs that I was working with, as well as governments and international institutions, are very concerned about food insecurity in this region. So I mentioned, you know, for the coffee as well as as the staple crops being production has actually already decreased in this region. It's no longer at its sort of maximum potential yield. And they're really concerned about corn. So my particular research that I that I worked on was around home gardens and home gardens are like sort of explaining [inaudible] a little bit. But the initial question came from the research team that I was collaborating with, and they were originally interested in the the relationship between agro biodiversity of home gardens.

[06:59 - 09:08] Sort of like vegetables and all sorts of diverse garden. And food security, household food security. And so I developed some really great sexy methods. I had all these participatory knowledge [laughs] mapping and mapping out of gardens, participatory mapping of gardens and in-depth interviews and life histories. And I had about 25 pages piece of that, sort about 25 pages of these great methods and went [inaudible]. I began to prepared, you know, I worked with the researchers and I get there and [inaudible], I presented it to the project team, which was the the Nicaraguan NGO, the second level Co-op, and some nutritionists and some other people that are involved in the larger 18 [unintelligible] 18 cooperative project. And they're like, That's great. Yeah, everybody really cool. But what we really want to know is why don't farmers just change? Like, why don't they [laughs] why don't why don't they just adapt and change their habits, start home gardens. They know how to do it. Why wouldn't they just do it on their own? You know, why do NGOs have to give out seeds? Why? You know, it was sort of this the way I took it at the time was this very individualistic attitude of like, pull, pull yourself up by your bootstraps and, you know, improve your livelihood. And at first, you know, I thought about this for a while. That's really, you know, sort of like, do they understand like these larger social processes of the market forces and, you know, the Revolutionary War that completely depleted the economy and, you know, all these sorts of like socio historical, economic, larger forces that have had an impact on farmers options in the region. And so I didn't say that, but I thought that and I was like, wow, I can answer this question. And so the

question became more sort of the agro biodiversity piece sort of got cut out and they were more interested in like if home gardens are an effective strategy to reach food security, that okay, that's my question.

[09:08 - 11:25] Their question was the second one is why farmers make [inaudible] changing their food, their food production and consumption strategies [inaudible]. This is just the organizations that were involved from the far right is the NGO and the second level co-op. These are CAN and GFCR to funding organizations and the researchers were sort of under the umbrella of CAN as well as their home academic institution. So these are sort of the players along with the 18 co-ops that I showed earlier. So once I had met with the project team and got the questions, I developed the the interview questions and the larger question obviously with the project team. And then I sort of got the okay to go out and meet with the different base level cooperatives and the farmers. So I would meet at each cooperative, I would meet with the Consejo or the council, the cooperative council. So the decision making, democratic decision making body in the community. And I proposed the different questions and the research. And most of them were like, Yeah, great. You know what sounds good. Here's the people you can talk to. And, well, I should talk about my sampling strategy, but I'll hold off on that. And one thing I just want to point out, the two men, gentlemen on the left, are sort of another layer, two people involved in this and this project, which they're called promoters. And they're they're often it's not a new phenomenon by any means, but often times used in as intermediaries between NGOs and the community or or between agronomists or technicians and the communities. And at this point, they're intermediaries. That's not necessarily the vision of what promoters can do. They're community members. They grew up in the community. They know the socio historical context. They can, in a lot of ways represent community needs to larger, the larger different programs and projects going on.

[11:25 - 13:40] And the idea is that they play a leadership role in the development of community development initiatives in the community. So I just wanted to point them out, I guess mostly because usually I've seen them quite often in Central America and Mexico in terms of a red flag for a participatory development project. And there's some stuff written about them, and I think they're just sort of it's sort of an important phenomenon and and mechanism to think about when we think about participatory [inaudible]. So in terms of the after meeting and and whatnot and my methods, I don't want to spend too much time on this, but I did just want to state sort of epistemologically where I'm coming from. I fall under the naturalist research paradigm, and that is I want to say this because I know there's tons of different there's tons of different fields and departments in here. And, and I just want to clarify where I'm coming from in terms of the methods that I use and that under the naturalist paradigm, it's it's believed that reality constantly changes and that you can't really know directly what

someone's reality is. Right? And so you can only understand through interactions of people and how they respond to each other and how they create their own reality. So that means we sort of accept the possibility that there are multiple versions of reality. There's no in contrast to maybe like a positivist philosophy. There's no one truth. You can't just, you know, there's no fixed, measurable, knowable, one reality. And so this is important for understanding how farmers make the world around them and how they make decisions because they make decisions on the way they perceive reality. And it gives us a lot of insights into their behaviors and decision making. And I mean, not just farmers, but anywhere you apply this sort of paradigm. Finally, Robin, [laughs] I tried to get in there earlier.

[13:40 - 16:14] I just couldn't do it. Okay, So food sovereignty is a really large, overarching, convoluted term that I'm going to try and break down in more simplistic terms as as as much as possible. So the idea arose historically out of peoples and producers and farmers discontent with the way the food system is being run. So not having control or decision making over their lands, their environments, their the direction they take, their culture. So food sovereignty is sort of a movement or an agenda to to reclaim those the control and decision making over food systems. It implies structural changes, which is something that makes a lot of people sort of uneasy to think about because we're talking about sort of bigger, larger changes. What do I want to say about that? I guess it's so when I talk about structural changes, it's some by the food sovereignty sort of agenda. It's viewed as a strategy to resist in a lot of ways, dismantle the current sort of agribusiness, corporate run food regime. And when I say that and considering food sovereignty in general, it is considered sort of an ideal type. It's this vision of of where we could be or where we could go. And it's something that you can base decisions on when you when you're thinking about how we how we reconstruct the food systems and the choices that people have. And I often get this question what about food security then? What about food security? How does that fit in? And I just briefly want to touch on it basically so I don't throw too much stuff at you guys is just food security, it's a little more intuitive. It's sort of like, you know, people having enough healthy access to enough healthy foods to meet their caloric needs on a daily basis in a culturally appropriate way. So this the food security agenda is sort of what has been traditionally implemented in different communities as a way to get people enough food.

[16:14 - 18:00] And in a lot of ways, and according to food sovereignty, literature and frameworks, it has in a lot of ways it emphasizes the maximizing of food production. So for those people who know not this, this is sort of his his philosophy that, you know, if we just produce more and more food, people will have more to eat. Right? But it's it also forgets to mention about how, where and by whom the food is produced. So I think there's tons of studies done, for example, where there was

plenty of food in the area, but people were starving. So it becomes more of a question of distribution. So these this is a, moving along, this is a picture of of a home garden. On the left is a drawing that's about an acre, acre big. And you see the different X's and stars and circles. And that's that represents sort of the diversity of different plants and bushes, trees, coffee, cacao, bamboo. This is in a different region, actually, of Nicaragua. The, the, the, the actual gardens that I was more focused on tend to be more up here towards the household. And it's the vegetable growing area. So we have this really broad, big, big agro biodiverse picture and then the garden is sort of closer to the household. And that's significant a lot of for a lot of reasons that I'm going to talk about. But on the right, it's just sort of interesting to see how organized home gardens actually are. Although they're taking place over this big area, they're actually usually partial, partial out into different management zones. And within each management zone, they grow different very different crops. So and they have different purposes. And so it's this very, you know, some when I say home gardens, sometimes people are like, oh yeah, like my garden in my backyard that has a few tomatoes. And I'm like, No, no, no, these are serious. [laughs] These are some like very well planned out, very, you know, people tend to subsist or rely on these for survival. So it's a little bit different than what some people have perceived. Okay. So back to the placement of the of the of the vegetable garden. It's significant for a few reasons. One is that it's because it's near the household. It tends to be a female space [coughs] which means that. Oops, not yet.

[19:00 - 20:35] It tends to be a female space. So it means that means that the woman, the female, the woman of the house who tends to stay around care for the children, traditionally manages it, makes decisions around it, saves seeds from it. Any leftover vegetables at the house doesn't consume is sold on the market, which offers an income to to women that that is often managed by the male counterpart in relationship. So it does have these socioeconomic opportunities with it. And so I think I pretty much said that. So these are sort of different characteristics. Medicinal, there's on average 70 species within a home garden, medicinal fruit trees, ornamentals. And my particular case, the home garden was being promoted as a diet diversification strategy within the food security, food sovereignty agenda. Which is relevant for some reasons I'll get into. So I don't know. This may have been sort of implied in my last slide, but I just sort of wanted to put it out there, you know, why home gardens and why food sovereignty is the idea that we that we farmers can control productive resources and in very historically lack of or when historically have had very little control over their systems or resources.

[20:38 - 22:50] So these are some initial preliminary research results of of of my last summer research. First of all, you know, so so why don't I don't farmers change their habits change and employ home gardens and and one thing I, one finding is that people think markets work better.

They would prefer to plant more coffee, for example. And perhaps coffee is easier to manage, which you already have sort of the mono cropping system going and and its, you know, plant more coffee and use the income to purchase food instead of doing the subsistence style. Another finding around altering food habits. So I mentioned that, you know, this was sort of pitched as a way to diversify diets and increase, you know, decrease visits to the doctor and have a more healthy consumption habit. And in Nicaragua, it's they have a relatively maybe what, you know, at least I would consider undiversified diet corn, beans, rice, tortillas, some onions and garlic and some peppers and stuff like that. But not a whole large diversity like maybe we're used to here. And so when we when we talk about home gardens are also implying that they're going to eat food, right? So if we're talking about diverse vegetable garden and they're not used to consuming vegetables, then it doesn't you know, it's not going to be an easy sell. And that's sort of reason to the next one around. Historically, culturally, farmers consume certain things, certain staple crops that they were raised to, raise to eat and raised to learn, you know, the how to grow and, you know, how to deal with pests and how to save the seed of and all such, all these things that, you know, is sort of ingrained and how they how they consume. How much time do we have left? [inaudible]

[22:52 - 22:55] Speaker 2: 25 minutes or so.

[22:55 - 25:15] Carrie: Okay. And then the other the other question that kept coming up was sort of who says that farmers want to be food sovereign? And it's that's really important given that within the definition of sovereignty is that farmers have the the have the power to choose how much they want to integrate into the markets and how much they want to participate in this agenda. And I think so I came in during my visits and conversations with farmers. I had, you know, it was sort of it was the sort of stereotypical common interaction where, you know, I'd go and sort of talk with them and get their input and and then be like, okay, so are you going to give us seeds or, you know, sort of what do we get out of talking with you? And they knew that I came from the larger food security project and we're just sort of like so, you know, like we'll do this sort of if you can provide us with the seeds, seeds are very expensive in Nicaragua. And so buying like, you know, a thing of seeds can be kind of unreasonable in some poor communities. So it was not unfounded by any means, but it just sort of, you know, that kept happening. Okay. That kept happening is sort of getting that sort of warning seeds and then, you know, we're sort of getting feeling that that not only sort of what they said, but also that feeling of this being a white person from an international place where I'm coming in and asking them what they think about stuff. And it's been happening for a long time. Right? So international development and aid in this region is very common. It's most people depend on outside organizations for basic social services. And especially since Reconstruction, after the Revolutionary

War, it's sort of been this influx of NGOs. So there is this long history of northern based countries directing development projects, and that was very apparent in my interactions with farmers.

[25:15 - 27:29] And it was sort of these expectations and, and it led to this this phenomenon that is it's nothing new. It's it's this concept called development discourse. And I'll talk a little bit more about it, but it's really becoming a foundation of of the way I'm interpreting and and seeing the inhibiting factors of [inaudible] so and a lot of ways farmers make decisions not to participate in food sovereignty agendas. And it's a form of resistance to these processes of change defined by project decision makers. And that's to, you know, it sort of was like, yeah, of course. You know, if people are used to sort of these top down projects coming in and speaking in a certain language and sort of offering certain things. They're going to, I sort of want explain this very well. I'll move on and come back to that. [laughs] So this idea of developing this course, which was developed by Arturo Escobar, he's a post development there is, I suppose, and he talks about this discourse. And I'm sort of looking at this. I should just back up a minute. The idea of home gardens was actually brought up in the democratically run assemblies within the cooperatives, right? So farmers voted on we want to do home gardens. And so it's not it was part, you know, sort of sort of expected a sort of expected strategy, but also voted on. Right. So they're buying into this. Yet they the question is like, why wouldn't farmers just, you know, develop their home gardens on their own without support? And, you know, if they understand the benefits, which they clearly did through my interviews, they understand the benefits of home gardens, why wouldn't they just do it on their own? So. So back to this development discourse. The idea is that development has been a primary mechanism through which part, like particularly Central America has been produced and has the ways they have produced themselves.

[27:30 - 29:20] So in some ways, by this known, well known and expected interactions with NGOs and and and other organizations and agronomists and whatnot, there's sort of this this course is expected, these products that are expected from development projects. There is even there's even this, you know, like this language that you I don't know if people here have worked in different countries with development. There's this particular language that you use when you're speaking as part of a project or an organization. And and it became this really became apparent to me because when I would go and talk with a farmer, he might start talking in sort of his native and comfortable tongue using slang words I didn't really understand. And then he'd be like, Oh yeah, okay. And he switched to this discourse that was the organization I consider like an organizational language. And so you're, you're sort of limited to certain words. And by being limited to certain words and like a certain lexicon or a vocabulary in some ways, limits the way you can perceive problems and the way you can develop solutions to them right? Because you're only sort of limited into this certain way of

thinking by the way you speak. And so that's sort of inhibits thinking of new actions. And this particular discourse, you know, it's ingrained in not only farmers, but also the organizations and different community organizations that are involved in development in this community. So for those who like [inaudible] that second thought is [inaudible] want to get into it. [laughs]

[29:22 - 31:34] So what I'm saying, what I'm sort of arguing is that Home gardens is a development strategy that relies on this sort of discourse that is embedded in farmers and organizations and having sort of products at the end of of of of development projects and sort of having these very ingrained trajectories and languages that that is known. It's going to inhibit a food sovereignty agenda because food sovereignty agenda demands that that we rethink the food system and that we come up with new solutions and this is one. This was, to do that there are methods, you know, this has been thought about for a long time. Right? So participatory action research is at the core of the project I was working with. Right? And the research under the researchers I work with, I understand this process, but they're also coming up to face to face with this discourse from the organizations they're working with and the farmers that are used to, you know, this way of doing things. So just just sort of briefly, this is sort of even if you don't want to see, you know, can read all this or whatever, the main point is that there is a process, there is a process that that happens that is not necessarily concerned with an end final product of a home garden development, for example. And it starts with describing, reflecting, acting and sharing. And actually the ah, okay. And also crucially, that the idea is that the farmers are at the center of this and that researchers or other people are just facilitate instead of direct this process. So this is sort of the ideal in terms of a process and empowering way of doing development, of doing community development. This and I hope this isn't confusing, I'll walk to this real quick. This is sort of what it looks like right now. This is a snapshot of what it looks like in the project I was working in.

[31:34 - 33:12] So over here you sort of have the funders and they're mostly talking with the research team and that's the funding that's channeled through there, right? So and then we have the second level co-op and Nicaraguan NGO and the farmers. So a few things you might notice, you know, paying attention to the arrows and the way they're they're facing. And there's the, the research the researchers are playing are playing an advisory role, but they're also filtering products and information through to the second level co-op and NGO. The funders actually play a you know, they're sort of off to the side. And although they do have to approve the proposal for funding, right? So in some way they do have a lot of control in some ways. But once they do that, they don't play. They don't play a huge role in the day to day sort of decision making, But they do help set the agenda. So so so there's the research team and their research team is advising and working with the NGO and the second level co-op information and reports and knowledge is going both directions in

that sense. But then when we get over here to the farmers, right, which ultimately, based on the last cycle that I showed you, should be sort of at the center of decision making and and instead, we have a lot of information, information and resources going to the farmers, but not a whole lot coming out. And that's this is a very simplistic way of representing that. And but I think it's really important for a lot of reasons [coughs] anyway.

[33:12 - 34:03] Especially in terms of having successful [inaudible] [coughs] right? So it's not that the researchers don't understand that this is happening. They understand this top down nature that's going on, But they themselves, as research, as action researchers, can't come in and tell the NGOs, you need to do this, this and this and make it participatory. Right. They're dealing with years and years, decades of top down projects that sedimentation of of experiences that. You know, it's very structural and it's it's what people know and are used to. And so they're up against a really big challenge. They are, we got like 10 minutes?

[34:04 - 34:05] Speaker 1: Ten or 15.

[34:09 - 36:29] Carrie: There are some alternatives. And in particular one it's called there's one that's a farmer to Farmer Exchange, and it's one that the larger project is working very hard to integrate into their their strategies. This is nothing new. It's it started in 1970s. And I've heard two different things in northern Guatemala, southern Mexico. But, you know, it's been going on since at least the 70s. And the idea is that it creates a social process where where farmers are able to to share their knowledge and experiences between each other, sort of an experiential knowledge shares. And it depends on and this process and this structure depends on local knowledge and ingenuity versus sort of the outside technician or maybe even even the nationally urban educated technicians and agronomists. And so I'm one I'm sort of wondering, can a model like this offer direction how to to overcome that development discourse that I that I mentioned and and help still steer more collaborative conservation. So I can just briefly give you the overview of this, because I know it's a lot of stuff, But so, on the left is the what is currently still currently the traditional way conventional communication model when we're talking about development and agriculture. And it sort of research developed, the researchers develop the technology, do experiments in the communities and then sort of transfer that knowledge to to farmers. And the idea of campesino, campesino which is the farmer the farmer program, is that the farmers actually already have a lot of knowledge of themselves and and particularly they collectively have a lot of knowledge.

[36:29 - 37:31] They've been growing and working on corn and beans for a really, really long time. And the idea is that it also builds community leadership. So if someone has a, you know, solution to a pest problem, for example, they're they're they, they come together in a workshop style setting and

sort of it's more of a popular education methodology and share with their peers. So there is a there's some, you know, there's quite a bit written on this and it's been happening, like I said, for a long time. In Nicaragua, there's one there's just to give you an idea of, of what it looks like on the ground. And there's one coordinator throughout for the entire country that coordinates different workshops in different areas. And it's very region specific, very context specific. So they so the idea actually I think I have a [inaudible]

[37:32 - 37:32] Speaker 1: Yeah.

[37:32 - 39:16] Carrie: Okay. So this is I was really lucky to get to participate in one of the workshops. The farmer capasino capasino. And on the left is there, it's pretty much all farmers. There's not too many outside besides me sort of in the corner, mostly observing [chuckles] what was going on. And so there it is, they get together. And the one coordinator for for the country sort of starts things off and he passes out sort of an overview agenda and and strategies for reaching the goals of of the of the workshop. And then he hands it off, essentially sort of gets it rolling and then hands it off to different participants. And that's sort of when the leadership role begins. The idea is then that people, farmers take that workshop agenda and, and start to get, you know, if, if they're bought into it and they can get works, they can also hold workshops in their own communities. And I can say by the end of this this particular workshop, farmers were really, really excited about doing just that. So what we did is, we broke out into different groups depending on if you're interested in more or corn or beans or soy. And and they basically, you know, 4 or 5 farmers got together and talked about what sort of issues that came up with their crop over that particular season and how they dealt with it, how their neighbors dealt with it. Sort of what, you know, what were some solutions that they came up with. So it was very sort of localized knowledge share.

[39:21 - 41:07] And then we went out. And so then each, you know, person from the group presented, you know, the guy standing up there presenting, This is what we did for the corn infestation and this is what we did for the cotton, et cetera. And then we went outside the picture on the right, and we were talking about seed selection and seed saving. And how do you choose the the best seed to save, so you get the strongest, most robust, most abundant crop the next year. And so we basically went out in a, you know, in one of the farmers land and collectively [chuckles] decided which corn would be best to save seed from. So they wouldn't eat that, but they would that that particular crop that they would save it to plant next year and it was, you know, I learned a lot. It definitely and I did get the sense, though, that most farmers, especially collectively, really kind of knew how to do this already, but it maybe wasn't on the floor of their strategies or methods for for replanting or whatever. So, I guess briefly, some of the issues that this model hopes to address, you

know, besides being farmer in many ways, farmer led is the idea when when there's an agronomist or a technician present as a key factor in these sorts of projects, it tends to put farmers in a passive role.

[41:09 - 42:47] And then and also the number of farmers that get reached by this new technology that's being brought in depends on how many people the technician can actually visit in a certain period of time. And, you know, they work directly with each farmer. So it tends some of the research, you know, some of the research and what I saw myself points to sort of a there's not much catalization among farmers and the typical agronomist or technician and and farmer relationship. It also addresses the issue of short term NGO budgets. So oftentimes and I've seen this time and time again when the budget runs out for a project like Home Gardens, for example, which I saw this [laughs] A bunch, it basically, you know, things revert back to pre project state. So, you know, the funding is gone, the project ends, it's sort of done. [laughs] And then rather than bringing in outside knowledge, sort of presuming ignorance in some ways by the farmers, the idea is that the extension has a new role of facilitating and supporting the process of farmer exchanges. Oh. No. Go back. [laughs] Okay, so [laughs] [coughs] Okay. So. Oh, no. I missed the best part. Okay. So [laughs] we'll come back to that.

[42:48 - 44:49] My final products for, I'm obviously, I'm writing my master's thesis on this but more tangible things that I'll pass off to the partners. First of all, first of all, I didn't mention that I worked with the research assistant in Nicaragua. She was a college, a college student. She was part of an internship that the local NGO, internship program that the local NGO facilitated. They have interns in and out that do like essay in and out, but I think it's actually like a two year cycle or something where they get trained, not only on administrative things but also in doing sustainable community development. And I have to say that it was one of the most rewarding things that I did working with her, because we learn so much from each other. And in the end we were asked by the NGO director to develop a to develop a manual on how to do in-depth interviews, because one of the things that they want to develop with an internship program is a way for students to do research in their own country and and sort of sort of as a as a part of one of the NGO projects. So her and I worked together and developed a sort of methodologies for doing in-depth interviewing. And we we went to the library together. We got all these methods, books, sociological methods books in Spanish and, and, and worked on it together. And we also, I trained her to do initially before that I trained her to do the how to do interviews. And it was really interesting because we, you know, I worked in the past with college students on sort of experiential learning. And she was just great, you know, she she had all these different perspectives that I never would have thought of.

[44:49 - 46:39] And I tried different ways to make it an empowering experience for her because she was reflecting on her own sociopolitical historical situation in a way because she comes from a farming community. And so that for me was also very rewarding. I did an exit presentation and report that basically shared my preliminary findings with the project team, project management team. The NGO and second. level Co-op and some, some other people. And I later learned that they did actually reference my research and in some decision making situations, which was sort of validating. [laughs] Like, Wow, I actually did something useful. And and then I'm still working on a final findings report which will come out of probably my thesis once I do sort of more in-depth analysis and I'll pass that off to them as well. So now back to that, one of the things I've learned over the years of working with people in Central America is it's really important to balance these really intense, big, deep issues with dancing and going out [laughs] and singing karaoke in Spanish. So this is sort of ode to that. [laughs] So so one of so just to sort of pull it all together. So I started talking about climate change and how we, you know, and I it's sort of like this idea of climate change governance and adapting and creating resilience around climate changes.

[46:40 - 48:11] It's not necessarily new new, but it is sort of, you know, we're still figuring out how to deal with it, sort of a new and new topic international institutions. But but what I'm finding is the issues of collaboration on the ground with communities and preparing for these strategies sort of is still remains steeped in the decades old decade old problems of participation and and community organization. So, so there's been plenty of research sort of done on like biodiverse farming methods and how to make farming methods more resilient to disaster and climate change, which is really important and really necessary. But I think what's also important is fundamental and fundamental, it's a question of social organization, in international collaborations, because none of that's going to make work. If there if there is if there isn't an organization and collaboration. So I guess this is where I'm ready for questions and any feedback because I'm still actually developing my outline. Which was supposed to be due a few days ago. Outline for my thesis. So if you do have any feedback, I'm really open to it and I really. Yeah. Thanks. All right. [applause]

[48:11 - 48:14] Speaker 1: So any response or feedback to Carrie? [inaudible]

[48:18 - 48:19] Carrie: Yes, Karen.

[48:19 - 48:34] Karen: Great presentation. [inaudible] And I was wondering if you could elaborate a little more on the type of people who are participating in the department program, like [inaudible] their super ethnicity or like economic background. [inaudible]

[48:37 - 50:12] Carrie: So yeah, so I guess I can mostly speak to my experience to the workshop that I went to. And I, you know, it was it was an all day workshop and I can't really tell you sort of, you know, they're Nicaraguans. [laughs] I'm not I couldn't tell you their sort of background in terms of connection with Indigenous bloodlines and stuff like that, which I assume there's definitely some there. But they I would say they're certainly not necessarily like large scale farmers. It's most likely going to be a more smaller, smaller scale farmer initiative. It's although I will say one of actually one of the guys in the picture used to run a large scale farm. And and after learning about the farmer to farmer exchange and going to some workshops, he actually changed his methods and did more small scale biodiverse setup because he found, you know, he was basically in place of the knowledge and and traditional methods he was replacing that with with inputs. Sort of chemical inputs and stuff like that. And I was like, well, shoot, if I don't have to do that or I don't know, I'll do this. Otherwise it's, you know, it's it's a connection with community as well as economically not having to buy the inputs. [inaudible] Yeah?

[50:14 - 50:29] Speaker 3: I was wondering how the locations were chosen because there's a coordinator. And then just curious about, you know, how like, how they choose the locations, you know, and the people that they're going to work with to do the farmer to farmer

[50:30 - 50:31] Carrie: Oh, the Farmer to Farmer program?

[50:32 - 50:32] Speaker 3: Yes.

[50:33 - 51:30] Carrie: So that depends. [laughs] My understanding of it is that there are national conferences as well as visits to certain sites, but it has to be. So I think this one they mentioned was sort of fostered out of a national conference where a national farmer to farmer exchange conference where someone went from that community and got excited about it and contacted that one coordinator that I mentioned and organized that exchange to happen. So they will go into communities and be like, Hey, do you want to do this? It has. They're very adamant about the people in the community asking for it. Yeah, that's really important. Thanks for pointing that out. Yes, Kelsey.

[51:32 - 51:52] Kelsey: So I wrote a couple questions I'm going to ask one. [inaudible] But you briefly mentioned who earlier in your presentation do farmers actually, [inaudible] says farmers actually want food sovereignty? What was your impression on the ground of understanding of the difference between food security and food sovereignty?

[51:53 - 53:29] Carrie: That's a great question. The difference is I heard the term to start. I heard the term food security a lot from farmers that like, yeah, you know, we need to have enough food and food security, food security, home gardens and food security. And I didn't actually hear the term sovereignty, which doesn't mean that it's not thought about in different terms, which is important to consider. Right. So when I, through my interactions with farmers and sort of like people asking for seeds and asking for different things for me and sort of expecting the project to kind of take care of things and, you know, we'll do the project if we get this stuff. And it made me believe, think that it's at least not within their discourse of, of, of thinking that way in food sovereign terms, you know, it's not in their realm of understanding. But then when I go to places like the workshop, the farmer and farmer exchange in a different community, which is not one that I interviewed, it's that's all they're talking about. You know, it's all it's it's sort of how do we save our own seeds? How do we work together to, you know, problem shoot these different, these, these different like pests or whatever in their in their on their farm. So did I answer your question? [laughs] Do you have a question, Jessica?

[53:31 - 53:36] Jessica: Yeah. So in when you presented your findings to the-

[53:38 - 53:38] Carrie: NGOs?

[53:39 - 53:43] Jessica: Yeah. Like what was their response to your reflections [crosstalk]

[53:47 - 55:29] Carrie: [laughs] Yeah. So I got great feedback from some people. And then others. And this was sort of I was worried about like the NGO director, for example, who had initially asked, why don't farmers just change and do this and that? And, and and then also some of the other people associated with the second level co-op were sort of like, good job, you know, like that's great. It wasn't really taken at least by some people as very seriously. I think there's something in there, you know, there is this idea of I think at least I worried and, you know, I could envision, you know, there is the sense maybe by pointing out these different issues that that there could be a fear of loss of some level of power in the [laughs] in the process. And so it's weird because I sort of got hot and cold from them and I'm not sure they knew exactly how to deal with it. And I mean, I had great rapport with everyone on the management team. We hung out and talked and philosophized and but yet, you know, and I, you know, that's really important to to to so that they do take you more seriously and you have that relationship but I it will probably be, it'll be coming have to come from many different sides I think like this one research isn't piece of research isn't going to change the way they view development. But I do think it's a good sort of snapshot [inaudible]

[55:33 - 55:36] Speaker 2: [inaudible] Kelly And if you don't mind, we've got Kelly before [inaudible]

[55:40 - 55:50] Kelly: So you were talking towards the beginning about [inaudible] that people still want to do something like raise coffee [inaudible]

[55:51 - 55:52] Carrie: Right.

[55:52 - 56:02] Kelly: Which [inaudible] but we do to me [inaudible] So I was wondering, like relative to the group or guess the rest of the world, how how is the United States doing? [inaudible]

[56:04 - 56:53] Carrie: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's really important. You know, we talk I'm talking about this far off place, Nicaragua, and this big thing, food sovereignty. But, you know, there it's not it's an international worldwide agenda that, you know, people all over the world are trying to to make moves towards. I think it's manifested mostly you see it in sort of small scale. Sort of small scale local farming operations like I know around there's different ways that like CSAs, for example, or, or even I guess people that are using sort of the. Did you want to add? Yeah, yeah. Do it.

[56:54 - 57:25] Speaker 4: I just wanted to mention that central Maine is just a small little town that everyone maybe 4000 people in this town, but everyone went to city council like two years ago and they all voted for food sovereignty. So now everything that they eat, the town has to be grown there. And it's basically just a trade and barter system. And I don't know if they still have it because the USDA is probably fighting back. When I was there in August, their sovereign period, two years of that. So.

[57:25 - 58:23] Carrie: There are different international organizations like Levia Campesina, which has a food [unintelligible], pushes the food sovereignty Agenda, which has international farming organizations from all over the world that that are sort of fighting in different ways or promoting different alternatives for food sovereignty. And we'll see about that. Yeah. So, I mean, I guess that's a good example and I think it is happening in different ways in the US as well. And it's just interesting too to think about how these different actions and moves that people are taking towards the food sovereignty agenda impact the international world, right? So if if farmers decide we're going to grow less coffee or less bananas, you know, what does that mean for people like us who consume a lot? And I think it's a really good question.

[58:24 - 58:26] Speaker 1: So let's let's let Pete wrap it up. [laughs]

[58:28 - 58:30] Pete: I really love that presentation.

[58:31 - 58:33] Carrie: Always starts off positive.

[58:34 - 58:52] Pete: I thought it was really interesting and appropriate how you sort of move toward the discussion of power as an alternative to traditional development, for example [inaudible] capasino capasino. So I ask you this, do you do you think the farmers in this area need food sovereignty?

[58:54 - 58:56] Carrie: I think you'd have to ask them that.

[58:56 - 59:10] Pete: Okay. So what if they did it together? [inaudible] context. Are we excitable? No, we don't want food sovereignty. We have to receive seeds. We don't do what we're doing.

[59:10 - 59:10] Carrie: Yeah.

[59:10 - 59:22] Pete: So what do you do with that? What about your experience and your training and your eight years of CAN and your understanding of context [inaudible] climate change.

[59:24 - 59:25] Carrie: You're asking for an answer?

[59:25 - 59:28] Pete: Yeah. [laughs] [inaudible]

[59:33 - 59:37] Carrie: Well, that's that's a really good question because it's.

[59:37 - 59:37] Pete: I hope so. [laughs]

[59:37 - 01:00:19] Carrie: Just the one you can ask me in my thesis defense? [inaudible] Yeah. I mean, it's I guess it would be sort of if they decided they didn't want to participate in a specific food sovereignty agenda, agenda that would in a way be a food sovereignty decision. I mean, they're sort of it's the core of sovereignty that I am grabbing on to, especially for my research, is that it is a choice. So if they're choosing not to for whatever reason.

[01:00:22 - 01:00:30] Pete: So that decision would be more legitimate than the one arrived at through resistance to top down traditional discourse? Okay.

[01:00:35 - 01:00:36] Carrie: Yeah, I don't I don't. I don't know the answer.

[01:00:37 - 01:00:38] Pete: No, I'm just [inaudible]

[01:00:38 - 01:00:38] Carrie: Yeah. [laughs]

[01:00:41 - 01:00:43] Speaker 1: Wow. That was a hard round of question. Great. [laughs]

[01:00:44 - 01:00:45] Carrie: I knew he was going to do it. [laughs]

[01:00:46 - 01:00:53] Speaker 1: Thank you Carrie for doing this. [applause] [inaudible]

END TRANSCRIPTION